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SUBJECT Economic and Sociological Observations
on Moscow and [REDACTED]

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1. [REDACTED] the difference between the quality and the quantity of goods in the city and in the country. The proximity of Moscow gave [REDACTED] a good opportunity to compare urban and rural conditions. In this comparison, Moscow was like a big show window which served as the front of a dingy and gloomy store. This difference was reflected in the most necessary of consumer commodities, such as foodstuffs. Although there was a great variety and ample supply of food for sale in Moscow, both the quality and the quantity of foodstuffs in [REDACTED] were insufficient throughout the year, except during those weeks preceding one of the great national holidays, such as 1 May and 7 November.

2. In Moscow, bread, which formed the main part of the Soviet diet, was made of wheat flour and was very tasty, but the bread in [REDACTED] was made of a dark flour, to which some potato flour had been mixed. The potato flour gave the bread a soggy appearance and taste. [REDACTED] sure that the addition of potato flour was illegal, and that the bakers kept some of the flour to sell on the black market. Black market dealers frequently appeared at the houses of German specialists selling a kg of white flour for 14 rubles; the regular market price was 8 rubles per kg. Regarding table fats, margarine is most generally used in the USSR. Butter was in ample supply in Moscow but rather scarce in [REDACTED]. Even in [REDACTED] Moscow, however, the butter supply became scarce toward the end of the quota year, in November and December. In Moscow, butter could only be bought in kgs, while the residents of [REDACTED] bought it in 100-gram units, since they could not afford a kg, if any. Before the price reduction in April 1952, the price of butter was 41 rubles per kg; after the price reduction, one kg of butter cost 32 rubles. These annual price reductions created a temporary and limited inflation, but were always

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followed by a gradual increase of prices until, at the time of the next price reduction, the commodities had reached or even surpassed the prices of the previous year. Meat was scarce in [] and plentiful in Moscow. The prices were prohibitive for Soviet workers. One kg of pork cost 35-38 rubles, a kg of soft sausage 28 rubles, a kg of hard sausage 52 rubles. Twelve-ounce tins of excellent meats and fish could be bought at Moscow for about 8 rubles per can. Most of the tins were Soviet made, although some US and British tins were still available on the market. US and British tins were sold in great quantities in 1946-48. There was a limited supply of canned meat in [] but the consumers preferred fresh or canned fish. The fresh fish, sold throughout the year, was of excellent quality. Vegetables could be bought only during the summer months in []. In Moscow, however, they were in sufficient supply during the entire year, due to the deep freeze storage facilities. The price of potatoes was very high during the winter and spring of 1951-52, because the 1951 harvest had been very poor. A 100-pound sack of potatoes cost 100 rubles.

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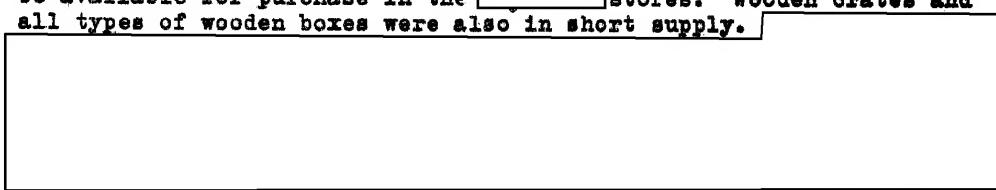
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3. Women's dresses in the Moscow stores were elegantly tailored and well designed. However, these dresses were so stereotyped and produced in such mass quantity that, when a woman wore a new dress in the streets of Moscow, she encountered hundreds of women wearing the identical dress and countless other women wearing a dress having the same tailoring with a different color pattern. Clothes were in ample supply in the department stores of Moscow, but material for clothes was almost impossible to obtain. The materials which were available in the stores were stereotyped in pattern and frequently of poor quality. It was impossible to buy wool thread. Black market dealers offered [] wool thread, but such dealers appeared only infrequently. Apparently wool was either stored or immediately woven into finished cloth. Leather shoes, never in supply at [], were very expensive in the Moscow stores. The price for a decent pair of low-cut leather shoes in Moscow was 350 rubles. A Soviet worker's monthly salary was between 450 and 600 rubles and, consequently, leather shoes were beyond his means.

4. There was a scarcity of all metal containers, even in Moscow. For example, aluminum pots were very seldom for sale in [] although the supply had greatly improved since 1946-48, when metal goods were simply unavailable. The overall supply of metal containers seemed to reach a peak in the spring of 1951; afterward it seemed to decrease slightly. Even during the spring of 1951, however, it was a matter of luck as to whether any metal pots, pans, or pails would be available for purchase in the [] stores. Wooden crates and all types of wooden boxes were also in short supply.



5. Nails, screws, nuts, and bolts were either scarce or of poor quality. Some of the nails [] hammered into the walls of [] houses did not penetrate the wood and flattened out. [] such nails were made of a steel with a high content of carbon, or of cast iron. The quality and supply of steel needles were also unsatisfactory. Knitting needles were entirely unobtainable; if [] able to get wool yarn, [] request that [] send needles so that [] could knit.

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6. There was an ample supply of radio and television sets, but these sets could only be bought by Nachalniki (department bosses) or the highly paid intelligentsia. A television set with an 8 x 13 cm screen cost about 1200 rubles. Since there was no installment buying in the USSR, a worker or even a skilled mechanic could not afford a television set and would have to save money for a long time to afford a radio. Most of the radio sets owned [redacted] were British or US made; only a few were German or Belgian (Philips). The great majority of Soviets had only a loudspeaker which was plugged into an outlet of the radio relay net, which most of the houses had, by which they could hear the program to which the next relay station was tuned. In this manner, the government had fairly good control of the programs which most of the population could hear. There was a sufficient supply of spare parts for radios in Moscow; and, since the Soviet radios were close imitations of US models, the Soviet spare parts could be built into our US apparatus without any difficulty.

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- To purchase spare parts, [] went to the so-called Commission Houses, where all kinds of goods were taken on consignment, either second-hand from previous owners, or new from firms who were permitted to sell a certain percentage of their goods on the free market. The prices charged by these Commission Houses were strictly regulated according to model and year of production of all goods, plus 7% commission which helped to sustain the establishment. [] also acquired radio spare parts at the [] just outside of the compound. At certain times, particularly at the end of a quota year or before one of the periodic government inspections, the [] discarded all materials which were considered waste. Tubes which had flaws and could not be used in plant production, or scraps of scarce metals, such as copper and nickel, were simply thrown on a heap in the back of the institute. From these piles we often salvaged pieces of metal or defective tubes which, with the knowledge of an expert, could be put to good use.

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7. Juvenile delinquency was a most serious problem in the USSR. []
[] there was no improvement as a result of the rigid laws
and severe penalties which prohibited youths from being on the streets
after 9 o'clock at night and threatened the death penalty for juvenile
thieves. Thefts repeatedly occurred []

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The worst hazard, however, was that of the juvenile gangs which frequented department stores, whose members were armed with razors. They watched people while they were buying and then robbed them of money and of their newly purchased goods. The robbers usually created a jam at the place where the victim was standing, cut the pockets or the strings of packages, and escaped into the crowd. The hazard was so great that Soviet women never carried handbags; they carried their money inside their clothing. The entire population was afraid of the juvenile raiders and made no effort to apprehend them even when they witnessed a theft. A Soviet woman [redacted] observed a theft and cried out to the victim, which thereby led to the apprehension of the thief. She later was caught in a crowd and had her face slashed by the razors of the thief's accomplices.

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